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Sapientiam Diligentes.

The Quiz of the Phi Sigma.

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Editors.

E. W. Ballentine. Miss Mary Fisk.

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In the cycle of human events, the decree of fate and the committee of programmes has again placed us in the editorial chair. We fill it more uneasily than on former occasions. We recognize what the high expectation of the Voice is. We recognize also that we have not been able to approach our own standard of what it should be, and this is not because our spirits were not willing to do our best, but that in the rushing whirl of events we have been so pressed for time that we have not been able to carry out our purposes. Several departments are conspicuously wanting. First we were crowded out of our advertising columns. We have not one single advertisement of "the store" to remind us of old time business prosperity. It must be that Minneapolis' competition with Chicago has drawn away the trade of the great Northwest so that our columns are no longer required to create business booms. Then our "column of comics" is wanting. We have a good reason for this. There were three ~~editors~~ captains appointed to run the Editorial ship. The Philosophical and biographical captains remained on board but the captain who would have furnished the fun jumped off, and as he swung

over the gunwale he shouted "Sink or swim, survive or perish, I've got other business to attend to and you must excuse me!"

Now our poetic columns are not occupied, We have had so many marriages in our society lately that we were left without couplets, Our rhymes would not be successful without these so the muses were neglected. Our base-ball and sporting editor is taking his vacation, therefore there is a blankness where his enthusiastic words would have been. We simply mention these facts to show with what difficulties we have had to contend, and how bravly comparatively we have buffetted opposition and as it were rose "ad astra per aspera". To the Editor little credit is due for this, but to his invaluable assistant all honor should be given. With calm serene patience her unwearied pen traced the multiplicity of beautiful and instructive thoughts in the three articles, which she generously contributed. It is unusual for ~~one~~ a lady to give more than one article to a number of the Voice, therefore the Editor is all the more grateful to Miss. Fisk for her abundant aid.

The Force of Habit is Well-nigh Irresistible.

One does involuntarily what one is accustomed to do. The frequent repetition of the same act produces such an effect upon the disposition or manners of a man, that he does, by a kind of second nature, what at first he did only perhaps after a deliberate choice following due reflection; and the longer he continues in the same course of conduct, the firmer hold it has upon him, till at last he finds that it is almost impossible to resist its force.

Yet the force of habit is not entirely irresistible. A man of strong will and with firm reliance in a power greater than himself, even in the Almighty One, can overcome habits which, to all appearances, are dragging him down to perdition. Even that most dreadful of all habits, opium-eating, has been overcome by some, who, seeing its evils, persevered in their good endeavors.

Man's daily life is a perpetual example of the force of habit. He rises, dresses, eats, works, and sleeps. He does not, before each trivial action, ask himself why or wherefore; he simply performs his daily tasks in accordance with his usual custom.

Upon the wind-swept beach of Acushnet

Point, New Bedford, stand six gnarled old oaks, whose leafless branches are twisted and knotted so that, against the horizon, they appear like black, writhing serpents. The trees bend away from the ocean which lies at their very feet, shrinking back as if in terror, and thus showing plainly the effect of the violent storm-winds which have swept over them. So it is with the man who lets his passions rule over him in youth. All the good that there may have been in him is stunted and perverted, and he becomes, like the oaks, a deformed object and useless, except "to point a moral, or adorn a tale."

May Fisk.

The Flight of Cicero.

To enter into a full appreciation of this most tragic event, one must glance backward, and survey, if but for a moment, the preceeding occurrences with which it is so intimately connected. While Pompey was exercising the power of sole consul at Rome, Caesar returned, fresh from his victories in Gaul, and in two months all Rome was at his feet. Civil war ensued, and in another year Pompey's lifeless body lay on the sands of the Egyptian sea-shore. Cicero, once a friend of Pompey, withdrew from the lost cause, and was kindly received at Rome by Caesar. Soon came that tragical close of Caesar's life. Cicero gloried in this "consecration of the dagger" to the cause of liberty, even wishing that it might have been turned against Antony, who at Caesar's death became tyrant of Rome. Cicero saw that the rest of his life must be spent in trying to free Rome from tyrant's bondage, and with all the powers of his eloquence he hurled those Philippics against Antony, warning the nation of its danger. From these scathing denunciations Antony was forced to flee to his army in Cisalpine Gaul, but made a secret alliance with young Octavius, whom the Romans

had placed at the head of affairs. These two, with Lepidus, formed the second triumvirate, which had Rome completely in its power.

And now the tragical tale begins. Prominent among the names on the proscription lists of the new triumvirate is that of Cicero, for Antony can never forget those terrible Philippics, which so aroused the hatred of the senate that they voted him "a public enemy." Spies are sent to seek Cicero; assassins, to put him to death. They go first to his beautiful mansion on the Palatine Hill, but he is not there. Now Cicero owns some half score of summer residences, pretty villas, in the neighboring towns and along the seashore. But whither shall they turn? In which is he spending these late autumn days? They are secretly informed that he is at his villa Tusculum. Thither they go with haste.

But Cicero is not unaware of his danger. He has heard that his name and that of his brother Quintus, who is now visiting him, are both on the proscription lists. Immediately, with a few slaves for aid and protection, they hasten along the road leading towards the sea. On the way, however, Quintus discovers that he has no money to pay his passage on

shipboard, and since Cicero has not enough for both, Quintus returns to his home at Rome, to obtain the necessary money, and also to save his son, if possible. But he never returns to Cicero, for both he and his heroic son are slain by assassins.

Meanwhile Cicero, thinking to join Brutus in Macedonia embarks on a small vessel. But he seems perplexed, undecided, and insists on being put on shore. Wandering up and down the beach, he is wrapt in troubled meditation, indeed - he is contemplating suicide. "If I should return to Rome", so he says to himself, "and die upon the threshold of the young Caesar's palace, what a revulsion of feeling it would produce in Rome against Caesar, and what dire vengeance of the gods it would call down upon his head!" But knowing what torture he must undergo, if he is discovered in Rome before he accomplishes his design, and persuaded by the tearful entreaties of his attendants, he once more embarks.

At nightfall the boat draws nigh to one of his seaside cottages, and, feeling seasick and weary, the old man, for he was within a month of sixty-four years, begs to land and rest there overnight. He knows he is in danger; but saying,

"Let me die in my own country which I have so often saved," he calmly lies down to sleep. His faithful slaves keep watch and, before dawn, bear him in his litter down through the thickly wooded garden, towards the sea.

Now the assassins, failing to find him at Tuscula, have been directed hither. They reach the cottage, but find it deserted. Some one points out the way of the escaping band. The assassins rush down the winding paths, some this way, some that. They come suddenly upon the little company just within the garden wall; and what do they behold? A few slaves bearing a litter, whose occupant looks up from his "beloved Euripides", with calm, determined eyes beneath gray, dishevelled hair. The pale features are worn with long anxiety and inward struggling. Surely it is not strange that the soldiers hide their faces for pity. But their leaders know no mercy, although one of them owes his very life to Cicero. Recognizing this one, Cicero turns to the other leader, a centurion, calmly saying, "Strike, old soldier, if you know your trade." His slaves wish to fight for their master, but no, - he stretches his neck for the blow, which severed his head from his body.

The murderers carry the head and hands straight to Antony, where he sits on the seat of justice in the Forum. He sends the head to his wife, who spitefully insults it, then returns it to her lord. He then has it, with the hands, nailed upon the Rostra.

The people gaze at the hoary head with ill-concealed sorrow. Cicero has stood before them a leading lawyer, a popular orator, an accomplished scholar, an honest governor, a glorious consul, the saviour of their liberty, the "Father of his Country". How can they but mourn at his death!

Thus the tyrant conquered. The hands which labored so valiantly for liberty could do no more; but the mouth spoke more eloquently than even the living lips had spoken, of the dead liberty of Rome. Roman liberty was indeed dead, but Cicero is still living, for in his own words, "They live who have escaped from the bonds of their flesh, as from a prison-house."

May Fisk.

Life of William Makepeace Thackery.

To write the history of a life that has never been written, to write the story of a man's existence, who opposed the writing of his own biography, especially when his wishes were respected, is a difficult matter. The most that such an account can attain to is a compilation of reminiscence and description by those intimate with the individual. Thackery disapproved of biography. He had seen the high mission of the biographer abused. He had seen one, whom he could not look upon with respect, fulsomely praised and flattered by one, who claimed to give a true account of the mans life. This so prejudiced him against the writing of biography, that when nearing his own end, he took a promise from his daughter not to write, nor permit to be written his biography and his desire was sacredly regarded. However, there were those, who knew and loved the man, and it would be a difficult matter to silence such upon the subject of a man, who filled such a large place in literature, and in the world, and in the hearts of his friends. One of those, who knew him, and was a fellow laborer with him gives an account of Thackery as he remembers him, of his personal appearance, of his manner of work, of his personal traits of character, of his parents and ancestors, and to him the writer would acknowledge his indebtedness for the facts of this paper. In one of the English Men of Letters series Anthony Trollope gives us his recollections of Thackery, and it is from this work that the writer has drawn his information. Back of every man are his parents, back of his parents are his ancestors. There are those who delight to take up a man's ancestors in writing a biography, and describe each specifically for several hundred years back; but the writer is not in sympathy with such a mode of writing a biography. He believes that beyond learning from a man's ancestors what was the

general tendency of life in the family that it is unessential to go back of the parents of the subject of a biography. The Thackery family was noted for its literary tendency. It had given to the world many clergymen and other eminent public men, but the father of the author, Richmond Thackery, was in the service of the East ondian Company His mother was Annie Becher, whose father was also in the company's service. She was married very early in India and was only nineteen when her son was born, July I8, I8II. She was left a widow with only this child in I8I6. A few years afterward she was married to Major Henry Carmichael Smith, with whom Thackery lived on excellent terms until the Major died. He was brought from India to begin his education at the Charter House. He came to the school a young, gentle, rather timid boy. Thackery was popular with the boys who knew him, but had no skill in games. He was early known for his faculty of paking parodies In I829 Thackery was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, and was removed in I830. During this year he wrote a poem for the prize, but it was won by Tennyson. The following are the four first and the four last lines:

In Africa--a quarter of the world--
Men's skins are black, their hair is crisp and curled,
And somewhere there, unknown to public view,
A mighty city lies called Timbuctoo.

I see her tribes the hill of glory mount
And sell their sugars ontheir own account,
While round her throne the prostrate nations come,
Sue for her rice and barter for her rum.

In I830 he left Cambridge and went to Weimar. It was the purpose

of his life to become an artist, and he studied drawing at Paris. He never learned to draw. He was always idle and did not do his best. Only on some occasion, when he was thoroughly moved by his work, did he do his best even in later life. He illustrated his own books and the delineations were incorrect, but they conveyed admirably the sense of the accompanying text. Dickens first met Thackery in 1835, when the latter proposed to become the illustrater of the former's first book, a proposition, by the way, which was not accepted. He went to London and became employed on Fraser's magazine. Carlyle was one of the most noted contributors at this time. All that Thackery wrote for it was not taken. All that was taken was not approved. In 1837 appeared in the magazine "The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the great Hogarty diamond". In this he first invented the name of Michael Angelo Titmarsh. While it was being brought out it was not thought much of at Fraser's, and he was called upon to shorten it. This is a very disagreeable task to any literary gentleman--to Thackery especially so. "I have got to make it shorter". Then he would put his hands in his pockets, and stretch himself and straighten the lines of his face, over which a smile would come, as though this intimation from his editor were the best joke in the world; and he would walk away with his heart bleeding and every nerve in agony."

In 1837 he married Isabella Shawe. He became the father of three daughters. But soon affliction entered his family. Through continued sickness his wife's mind became impaired, and thoughhe waited on her in her illness with tenderest affection, it became evident that she must be taken to a secluded, quiet place, which was done, and he became, as it were, a widower until the end of his days. Between 1843 and 1853 he wrote much for Punch. It has been said, "In a good day, for himself,

the journal and the world Thackery found Punch. In 1846 was commenced in numbers the volume which first made his name known to the world--'Vanity Fair.'

Thackery was a man of no great power of conversation. He was not a man to be valuable at a dinner table as a good talker. It was when there were but two or three together that he was happy himself and made others happy; but after Vanity Fair was given to the world he stood higher among the literary heroes of his country, and had endeared himself to a special knot of friends. His face and figure--his six feet four in height--his flowing hair, nearly gray, his broken nose, his broad forehead and ample chest, encountered everywhere either love or respect. His children were very dear to him, of whom he said in one ballad,

I thought as day was breaking
My little girls were waking
And smiling and making
A prayer at home for me.

In 1852 and 1853 he came to the United States and read publicly from his book entitled the 'English Humorists of the 18th Century.' It is certain that he never had those wonderful gifts of elocution which made it a pleasure to listen to Dickens. The rendering of a piece by Dickens was composed as an oratorio is composed, and was then studied by heart as music is studied. There was nothing of this with Thackery, but the thing read was in itself of great interest to educated people. His readings were very successful. Dickens read from his best known works. Thackery prepared his readings for that purpose. On several occasions he endeavored to get prominent official positions but his good fortune prevented him from securing these. He would not

have been adapted to the House of Commons. He was too desultory for regular work--full of thought, but too vague for practical questions. He could not have endured to sit for two or three hours at a time pretending to listen to dry speeches.

In 1859 he undertook the last great work of his life--the editorship of the Cornhill Magazine. When it became known that Thackery would edit it, the expectation for it was very eager, and one hundred and ten thousand of the first number were sold. The magazine achieved a great success, but Thackery was not a good editor. He could not bring himself to read the mass of manuscript with which he was deluged and much of the editorial work was left to subordinates. A man so unmethodical, so prone to work by fits and starts could not have been a good editor. He continued to edit the magazine until April 1862, but continued to write for it until the day he died, Dec. 24, 1863. His death was caused by spasms from which he had occasionally suffered for many years.

Thackery has been generally characterized as a cynic by those who did not know him personally, but how different was the opinion in that circle of friends which was privileged to approach and to know him is expressed in the poem to his memory which appeared in Punch a short time after his death.

He was a cynic! by his life all wrought
Of generous acts, mild words and gentle ways;
His heart wide open to all kindly thought
His hand so quick to give, his tongue to praise.

He was a cynic! You might read it writ
in that broad brow, crowned with its silver hair;

In those blue eyes with childlike candor lit,
In that sweet smile his lips were wont to wear.

He was a cynic! By the love that clung
About him for his children, friends and kin;
By the sharp pain light pen and gossip tongue
Wrought in him, chafing the soft heart within.

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Editors. { E. W. Ballantine
Miss May Fisk

Contents

"The Eve of Saint Agnes."

by John Keats.

As the setting sun often sheds brilliant lights and delicate colors upon the world of nature about us, towards the close of a stormy day, so John Keats gave to the world of thought and feeling this exquisite lyric poem just before his tragic life was ended.

It is a single poem, yet it is composed of three pictures. The warmth and beauty of the central picture is the more enhanced by the chill and horror of those on either side. It reminds one strongly of that late famous painting of the "Prodigal Son", in its triple frame. The central picture was all glowing with brilliant color, a scene of feasting and dancing, while those on either hand, scenes of sadness and anguish, painted in dark gray tints, were in perfect contrast with the joyous scene between them.

The poem begins with a description of the evening itself,

"Saint Agnes' Eve, — ah, bitter chill it was!"

It pictures the effects of this bitter cold, both without and within a baronial castle, and draws a most touching picture of an ancient beadsman and his "harsh penance on Saint Agnes' Eve."

Returning, lamp in hand, from his prayers in the dark, cold chapel, he heard sweet strains of music — "So it chanced, for many a door was wide,

From hurry to and fro."

Thus is introduced the second picture of the poem, glittering as a gem from its dusky setting. The rooms above, all "glowing to receive a thousand guests", are vividly portrayed; then, with a brief glance at the throng of visitors, the heroine of the poem is brought before us in all her loveliness, the "thoughtful Madeline". In all this revelry "her heart was otherwhere", for she was brooding on the stories old dames had told her, how, by performing certain ceremonies, she might see her true love that midnight.

"Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline."

Venturing in, he met an old beldame, Angela, who was his only friend in all the castle save Madeline, for these guests were his deadly foes. Hearing of Madeline's whim, he proposed a stratagem which should literally fulfill her desires. He convinced Angela that his intentions were perfectly pure, and finally persuaded her to lead him to "the maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste", where, concealed in a closet, he might watch in rapture the lady of his love. As she entered, her silver taper went out, but the moonlight shone only the more radiantly upon her as she knelt in prayer before the stained glass window. Arising from her knees, she put off her rich attire and soon lay in

unconscious slumber. Then Porphyro arose, spread a bounteous repast of candied fruits and delicate jellies, with which the old dame had furnished him, and taking Madeline's lute, he played softly upon it, singing to awaken her. She spoke yet thought herself still dreaming, but he answered,

"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"

He plead with her to

"Awake! Arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee".

Then they hasted, crept softly down the broad stairs, through the wide halls, past the sleeping porter and the groaning outer door, and fled into the storm and darkness.

Then comes the third and last picture in the poem, the horrible nightmares of the sleeping guests, and the death of aged Angela and of the ancient beadsman.

The poem, by its Spenserian stanzas, shows the potent influence which Spenser's poems had over the young poet's mind; and the passionate love of Porphyro is but a reflection of Keat's own love, his first and only passion. Fanny Brawne had, but a few months before the writing of this poem, awakened that passion in him, which he said was both "pleasure and torment". The poet even uses the same word to express his own love and Porphyro's. He makes the latter

say "May I be for aye thy vassal blest?" while he himself, in one of his early letters to Fanny, writes, "The very first week I knew you, I wrote myself your vassal."

Lord Jeffrey has said "The glory and charm of the poem is the description of the fair maiden's antique chamber and of all that passes in that sweet and angel-guarded sanctuary," but the entire poem is beauty crystallized. Throughout it shows that concentration of imagery, by which a whole picture is set forth in a few clear, decisive words. Here are two instances, both moonlight pictures;-

"Beside the portal doors,
Buttressed from moonlight stands he, and implores
Allsaints to give him sight of Madeline."
"He found him in a little moonlit room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb."

The poet's vocabulary is well-nigh inexhaustible, and every word seems to be so well adapted to the very place it occupies, that it could not be bettered.

The scenes are laid in the ideal and antique, rather than in the real and present, and yet the poet's perceptions are so accurate that there is perfect harmony throughout. Keats lived in the world of fancy, and poetry was to him a necessity. He was "one whose thoughts were passions, and who sang because he must."

His yearning passion for the beautiful was the cause of his writing the poem, a passion not simply for physical beauty, but for that moral beauty of soul depicted in his hero and heroine, the fearless courage and true-hearted tenderness of Porphyro, the child-like innocence and spiritual purity of Madeline.

May Fisk.